IN THE CLAIMS

In accordance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.121, the following LISTING OF CLAIMS identifies the claims as "original", "currently amended", "cancelled", "withdrawn", "new" "previously presented", or "not entered" as the case may be. In accordance with the Rules, the text of cancelled and not entered claims is not presented.

CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method to respond to a customer query received at a customer interaction system, the method including:

communicating an expert group list including at least one expert group to an agent serving a customer;

receiving a selection from the agent that identifies an expert group from the at least one expert group, the selection triggering a first immediate message that includes a request for assistance from the expert group;

receiving the first immediate message and invoking a workflow based upon the selection in response to the first immediate message;

identifying at least one expert that is associated with the expert group automatically utilizing the workflow; and

establishing an immediate message connection between the at least one expert and the agent, wherein the immediate connection enables the exchange of immediate messages between the at least one expert and the agent so the agent may respond to the customer query.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the identifying the at least one expert includes retrieving a predefined association between the at least one expert and the expert group.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the identifying the at least one expert includes using an immediate message service to monitor a status of the at least one expert.

4. (Original) The method of claim 3, wherein the identifying the at least one expert includes identifying the at least one expert if the status of the at lease one expert permits an interruption.

5. (Original) The method of claim 3, wherein the identifying the at least one expert includes executing a workflow including business logic to access configuration data associated with the at least one expert.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the identifying of the at least one expert includes communicating via an immediate message service to determine if the at least one expert will provide expert support to the agent.

7. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein the communicating via an immediate message service includes at least one of a parallel communication and a serial communication.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the identifying of the at least one expert includes at least one of presenting the request for assistance to all experts in the expert group and presenting the request for assistance to a predetermined number of experts in the expert group and presenting the request for assistance to at least one expert based on preferences selected by an agent.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the identifying of the at least one expert includes accepting the request for assistance from a single expert.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9, further including notifying and excluding other experts from accepting the request for assistance.

11. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the identifying of the at least one expert includes identifying a predetermined number of experts that accepts the request for assistance.

12. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the establishing of the immediate message connection includes connecting the agent to a customer interaction system, which in turn, is connected to the at least one expert.

13. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein the customer interaction system is dropped from the immediate message connection.

14. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the expert group, the at least one expert and the agent are identified with instant message screennames.

15.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the immediate message includes an instant message and the immediate message connection includes an instant message connection and the immediate message service includes an instant message service and an immediate message session includes an instant message session and an immediate metadata includes an instant message metadata.

16.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the customer query includes at least one of an email, a telephone call, a second immediate message, and a web chat that is established and processed by a customer interaction system.

17.   (Original) The method of claim 15, further including logging an immediate message session between the agent and the at least one expert in an immediate message log for subsequent searching, wherein the immediate message session includes immediate metadata and immediate messages.

18.   (Original) The method of claim 16, further including capturing statistics on a plurality of immediate message sessions and reporting the statistics to facilitate the management of the customer interaction system.

19.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the identifying the at least one expert includes identifying the at least one expert based on the name of an expert that was selected by the agent.

20.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein communicating at least one expert group to the agent includes communicating expert groups associated with the agent.

21.   (Currently Amended) A system to respond to a customer query received at a customer interaction system, the system including:

        a communication module to communicate at least one expert group to an agent serving a customer, the communication module to further receive a selection from the agent that identifies an expert group from the at least one expert group, the selection triggering a first immediate message that includes a request for assistance from the at least one expert group;

an identification module <u>to invoke a workflow based upon the selection in response to the</u> <u>first immediate message and</u> to <u>utilize the workflow to automatically</u> identify at least one expert that is associated with the expert group; and

a connection module to establish an immediate message connection between the at least one expert and the agent, wherein the immediate message connection enables the exchange of immediate messages between the at least one expert and the agent so the agent may respond to the customer query.

22. (Original) The system of claim 21, wherein the identification module is to retrieve a predefined association between the at least one expert and the expert group to identify the at least one expert.

23. (Original) The system of claim 21, wherein the identification module is to utilize an immediate message service to monitor a status of the at least one expert.

24. (Original) The system of claim 23, wherein the identification module is to identify the at least one expert if the status of the at least one expert permits an interruption.

25. (Original) The system of claim 23, wherein the identification module is to execute a workflow that includes business logic to access configuration data associated with the at least one expert to identify the at least one expert

26. (Original) The system of claim 21, wherein the identification module is to communicate via an immediate message service to determine if the at least one expert will provide expert support to the agent.

27. (Original) The system of claim 26, wherein the identification module is to communicate in at least one of a parallel communication and a serial communication.

28. (Original) The system of claim 21, wherein the identification module is to identify the at least one expert includes to present the request for assistance to all experts in the expert group and

to present the request for assistance to a predetermined number of experts in the expert group and to present the request for assistance to at least one expert based on preferences selected by an agent.

29.   (Original) The system of claim 28, wherein the identification module to identify the at least one expert includes to accept the request for assistance from a single expert.

30.   (Original) The system of claim 29, wherein the identification module is to notify and exclude other experts from accepting the request for assistance.

31.   (Original) The system of claim 28, wherein the identification module is to identify the at least one expert by identifying a predetermined number of experts that accept the request for assistance.

32.   (Original) The system of claim 21, wherein the connection module is to establish the immediate message connection to connect the agent to a customer interaction system, which in turn, is connected to the at least one expert.

33.   (Original) The system of claim 32, wherein the customer interaction system is dropped from the immediate message connection.

34.   (Original) The system of claim 21, wherein the expert group and the at least one expert and the agent are identified with instant message screennames.

35.   (Original) The system of claim 21, wherein the immediate message includes an instant message and the immediate message connection includes an instant message connection and an immediate message service includes an instant message service and an immediate message session includes an instant message session and an immediate message metadata includes an instant message metadata.

36.   (Original) The system of claim 21, wherein the customer query includes at least one of an email, a telephone call, a second immediate message, and a web chat that is established and processed by a customer interaction system.

37.   (Original) The system of claim 35, further including an administrative module to log an immediate message session between the agent and the at least one expert in an immediate message log for subsequent search, wherein the immediate message session includes immediate message metadata and immediate messages.

38.   (Original) The system of claim 36, wherein the administration module to capture statistics on a plurality of immediate message sessions and to report the statistics to facilitate the management of the customer interaction system.

39.   (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein the identification module to identify the at least one expert includes to identify the at least one expert based on the name of an expert that was selected by the agent.

40.   (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein the identification module is to communicate at least one expert group to the agent based on expert groups associated with the agent.

41.   (Currently Amended) A system to respond to a customer query received at a customer interaction system, the system including:

a first means for communicating an expert group list to an agent serving a customer, the first means to further receive a selection from the agent that identifies the an expert group from the expert group list, the selection triggering a first immediate message that requests assistance from the at least one expert group;

means for receiving the first immediate message and invoking a workflow based upon the selection;

a second means for automatically identifying at least one expert that is associated with the expert group using the workflow; and

a third means for establishing an immediate message connection between the at least one expert and the agent, wherein the immediate message connection enables the exchange of immediate messages between the at least one expert and the agent so the agent may respond to the customer query.

42.   (Currently Amended) A machine readable medium storing a set of instructions that, when executed by the machine, cause the machine to:

communicate an expert group list including at least one expert group to an agent serving a customer;

receive a selection from the agent that identifies an expert group from the at least one expert group, the selection triggering a first immediate message that includes a request for assistance from the expert group;

receive the first immediate message and invoke a workflow based upon the selection;

identify automatically at least one expert that is associated with the expert group utilizing the workflow; and

establish an immediate message connection between the at least one expert and the agent, wherein the immediate message connection enables the exchange of immediate messages between the at least one expert and the agent so the agent may respond to the customer query.

43.   (Currently Amended) A method to respond to a customer query received at a customer interaction system, the method including:

communicating a choice of preferences to an agent serving a customer;

receiving a selection of preferences from the agent, the selection of preferences triggering a first immediate message that includes a request for assistance from at least one expert;

receiving the first immediate message and invoking a workflow in response to the first immediate message and the selection;

identifying at least one expert based on the selection of preferences automatically using the workflow; and

establishing an immediate message connection between the at least one expert and the agent, wherein the immediate message connection enables the exchange of immediate messages between the at least one expert and the agent so the agent may respond to the customer query.

44.   (Original) The method of claim 43, wherein the identifying the at least one expert includes using an immediate message service to monitor a status of the at lease one expert.

45.   (Original) The method of claim 44, wherein the identifying the at least one expert includes identifying the at lease one expert if the status of the at least one expert permits an interruption.

46.   (Currently Amended) A system to respond to a customer query received at a customer interaction system, the system including:

a communication module to communicate a choice of preferences to an agent serving a customer, the communication module to further receive a selection of preferences from the agent, the selection of preferences triggering a first immediate message that includes a request for assistance from at least one expert;

an identification module to invoke a workflow based on the selection in response to the first immediate message and to utilize the workflow to automatically identify at least one expert based on the selection of preferences; and

a connection module to establish an immediate message connection between the at least one expert and the agent, wherein the immediate message connection enables the exchange of immediate messages between the at least one expert and the agent so the agent may respond to the customer query.

47.   (Original) The system of claim 46, wherein the identification module utilizes an immediate message service to monitor a status of the at least one expert.

48.   (Original) The system of claim 47, wherein the identification module is to identify the at least one expert if the status of the at least one expert permits an interruption.

49.   (Currently Amended) A machine readable medium storing a set of instructions that, when executed by the machine, cause the machine to:

communicate a choice of preferences to an agent serving a customer;

receive a selection of preferences from the agent, the selection of preferences triggering a first immediate message that includes a request for assistance from at least one expert;

receiving the first immediate message and invoking a workflow based upon the selection;

identify automatically at least one expert based on the selection of preferences utilizing the workflow; and

establish an immediate message connection between the at least one expert and the agent, wherein the immediate message connection enables the exchange of immediate messages between the at least one expert and the agent so the agent may respond to the customer query.

50.   (Currently Amended) A method to respond to a requester query received at a customer interaction system, the method including:

communicating at least one expert group to a requester;

receiving a selection from the requester that identifies an expert group from the at least one expert group, the selection triggering a first immediate message that includes a request for assistance from the expert group;

receiving the first immediate message and invoking a workflow based upon the selection;

identifying automatically at least one expert that is associated with the expert group using the workflow; and

establishing an immediate message connection between the at least one expert and the requester, wherein the immediate message connection enables the exchange of immediate messages between the at least one expert and the requester so the requester may receive a response to the requester query.

51.   (Original) The method of claim 50, wherein the identifying the at least one expert includes using an immediate message service to monitor a status of the at least one expert.

52.   (Original) The method of claim 51, wherein identifying the at least one expert includes identifying the at least one expert if the status of the at least one expert permits an interruption.

53.   (Currently Amended) A system to respond to a requester query received at a customer interaction system, the system including:

a communication module to communicate at least one expert group to the requester, the communication module to further receive a selection from the agent that identifies an expert group from the at least one expert group, the selection triggering a first immediate message that includes a request for assistance from the expert group;

an identification module to invoke a workflow based upon the selection and to utilize the workflow to automatically indentify at least one expert that is associated with the expert group; and

a connection module to establish an immediate message connection between the at least one expert and the requester, wherein the immediate message connection enables the exchange of

immediate messages between the at least one expert and the requester so the agent may receive a response to the requester query.

54.   (Original) The system of claim 53, wherein the identification module utilizes an immediate message service to monitor a status of the at least one expert.

55.   (Original) The system of claim 54, wherein the identification module is to identify the at least one expert if the status of the at least one expert permits an interruption.

56.   (Currently Amended) A machine readable medium storing a set of instructions that, when executed by the machine, cause the machine to:

        communicate an expert group list including at least one expert group to a requester;

        receive a selection from the requester that identifies an expert group from the at least one expert group, the selection triggering a first immediate message that includes a request for assistance from the expert group;

        receive the first immediate message and invoke a workflow based upon the selection;

        identify automatically at least one expert that is associated with the expert group using the workflow; and

        establish an immediate message connection between the at least one expert and the requester, wherein the immediate message connection enables the exchange of immediate messages between the at least one expert and the requester so the requester may receive a response to the requester query.